

Message Text

PAGE 01 BONN 15368 241543Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 USSS-00

INRE-00 NSAE-00 /031 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8249

S E C R E T BONN 15368

EXDIS

E.O. LL652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, GW

SUBJECT: FRG CONCERNS REGARDING US WEAPONS SHIPMENTS
FROM FRG TO MIDDLE EAST

REF: BONN 15333

1. FRG DEFMIN LEBER CALLED ON ME OCTOBER 24 AT HIS URGENT INITIATIVE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER OF US ARMS AND MILITARY MATERIALS DELIVERIES TO ISRAEL FROM THE US ACTIVITIES IN THIS REGARD THE PREVIOUS EVENING, AND THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD NOT INFORMED HIM OF ANY PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND STATE SECRETARY. IT BECAME CLEAR TO ME AT THE OUTSET OF THE CONVERSATION THAT LEBER'S INFORMATION EVEN THEN WAS FAIRLY LIMITED. I THEREFORE BRIEFED HIM FULLY ON MY OCTOBER 16 DISCUSSION WITH SCHEEL AND MY OCTOBER 23 DISCUSSION WITH FRANK.

2. LEBER WAS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR THIS INFORMATION. HE HAD ONLY LEARNED OF THE US ACTIONS WHEN INFORMED LAST NIGHT ABOUT DIFFICULTIES WHICH ISRAELI SHIPS WERE EXPERIENCING IN BREMERHAVEN WITH REGARD TO THE LOADING OF AMMUNITION DESTINED FOR ISRAEL.

3. LEBER THEN CAME TO THE OBVIOUS POINT OF HIS CALL.
SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 15368 241543Z

HE SAID THAT HAD HE KNOWN OF THE US ACTIONS HE WOULD HAVE MADE PUBLIC HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR OUR ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL. HE ASSUMED THAT THE LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES STEMMED FROM

THE FACT THAT MANY IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE, CONCERNED OVER THE ARAB OIL LEVERAGE ON THE FRG, WERE AWARE OF LEBER'S OWN STRONG PRO-ISRAELI SENTIMENTS. HE SAID HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING WASHINGTON'S REACTION TO FRANK'S OCTOBER 23 DEMARCHE TO ME. IF THE US DECIDED IT WISHED TO CONTINUE SUPPLYING ISRAEL WITH ARMS AND EQUIPMENT FROM US DEPOTS IN GERMANY, LEBER WISHED TO BE INFORMED SO THAT HE COULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO WIN SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. HE RECOGNIZED THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE SECOND CEASE-FIRE, THIS WHOLE SITUATION MIGHT TAKE ON A NEW COMPLEXION WHICH MADE FURTHER SUPPLIES FROM THE FRG UNNECESSARY.

4. COMMENT: LEBER WAS OBVIOUSLY EXTREMELY IRRITATED BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S NONCOORDINATION OF ITS POSITION WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. HIS APPARENT PIQUE COMBINED WITH HIS WELL-KNOWN PRO-ISRAELI STANCE UNDOUBTEDLY LED TO HIS URGENT VISIT. WHETHER HE CAN BRING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AROUND TO ACCEPT HIS POSITION IS OF COURSE ANOTHER THING. HE PERSONALLY SEEMED PREPARED TO DO WHATEVER HE COULD TO SUPPORT THE US AND ISRAEL.

5. MY OWN IMPRESSION IS THAT LEBER WILL MAKE A SINCERE EFFORT ON BEHALF OF DELIVERIES TO ISRAEL IF WE ARE PREPARED TO HAVE HIM PUSH THINGS HARD WITH THE CHANCELLERY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY. HIS FIGHT MAY NOT BE AS EASY AS HE THINKS, HOWEVER, SINCE THE FRG CONCERN OVER OIL SUPPLIES IS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER OF SERIOUS SIGNIFICANCE, AND HE MAY FIND THAT THE CHANCELLOR WOULD NOT SUPPORT HIM.
HILLENBRAND

SECRET

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, SHIPPING DATA, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BONN15368
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: LL652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750014-1685
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731065/abqceegf.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN BONN
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: BONN 15333
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01-Aug-2001 by kellerpr>; APPROVED <21-Sep-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRG CONCERNS REGARDING US WEAPONS SHIPMENTS FROM FRG TO MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: PEPR, US, GE, XF, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005